

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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**Date:** 2/21/2016

**GAIN Report Number:**

## Israel

**Post:** Tel Aviv

### **TidBits - Israeli Agriculture and Food News**

**Report Categories:**

Agriculture in the News

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**Report Highlights:**

Developments in Israel's food and agriculture sector:

- New Restrictions on Pesticides
- Health Certificate for Feeder Cattle from the US
- Beef Imports from the US

## **General Information:**

**New A Levels Allowed for Pesticide Use** – In a January 2016 meeting, the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) Health Committee approved new regulations for the use of pesticides in food, vegetables and fruits. The use of sixteen pesticides, including *Endosulphan* is now totally prohibited, while the use of twenty other pesticides, mainly organophosphates, was significantly limited. In parallel, the committee approved the use of substitute pesticides that are considered to be more consumer and environmentally friendly. Committee members recommended expanded use of biologic pesticides and the adoption of more restrictive American and European standards.

**Health Certificate for Feeder Cattle from the United States** – In December 2015, USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the Israeli Veterinary and Animal Health Services (IVAHS) agreed on a new health certificate for feeder cattle exported from the United States to Israel. Israel annually imports 100 – 130 thousand calves, mainly from Australia, of which seventy percent are young calves for fattening in Israel and thirty percent are ready-for-slaughter young cattle destined for the West Bank and Gaza. According to experienced exporters, the market for U.S. calves and young cattle could number 30 - 40 thousand on an annual basis.

**Beef Imports from the United States** – On February 4, 2016, the IVAHS, after years of discussions with USG officials including from USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, officially approved imports of beef from the United States. U.S. product has been out of the market since 1994. At this point in time, due to a combination of veterinary and kosher requirements, only one U.S. slaughterhouse in Nebraska has been approved for exports, but other plant approval requests can be expected in the not-too-distant future. After ensuring compliance with Israeli animal health and food product regulations, the Government of Israel (GOI) followed through on providing this access in keeping with the objective of increasing competition in the market. The GOI is struggling to reduce food prices in the Israeli market. Israel imports between 70 and 80 thousand tons of beef annually, almost all frozen from South America. Market prospects are good for high quality, chilled or fresh beef. Some industry observers project that the value of U.S. beef exports to Israel could surpass \$100 million annually in a few years' time.